

Regarding Wickedness in My Heart

Tanya Moore

I woke up in the middle of the night with a panic attack. I get those every so often and the only thing that helps is to read my Bible – usually comforting Psalms. This night I happened to be reading Psalm 66, and I read “If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear” (verse 18).

I’ve probably read that verse many times, but this time it sent a shock wave through my body. The reaction was so physical I was surprised my teeth didn’t chatter.

Praying is what I do. If anybody I know has a problem or is ill or has a need, I pray. I pray for my kids and grandkids every day. I pray for my mom and my brother and his wife and their family. I pray for my husband’s sister and husband and their family. I pray for my nephew and his family. I pray for my ex-daughter-in-law and my ex-sister-in-law. I pray for our church and our pastors. I pray for our country. I pray for the world. I pray for my boss and my coworkers. I talk to God all the time about what’s going on in my life and what I’m struggling with. I pray for my husband. I pray for our friends and their kids and grandkids. I count on God to hear and answer.

And, according to this verse, maybe He won’t. “If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear.” I know God forgives sin so this verse couldn’t mean that if I sinned, God wouldn’t hear me. So what does “regard wickedness” mean?

Many years ago, my daughter gave me a study Bible with lexical aids to the Old and New Testaments. Thankfully, the word “wickedness” in this verse is one of the words with a definition in the lexicon. Of course it means wickedness, but it also means “emptiness which results in idolatry.” I know what that means for me. It means trying to fill my emptiness with something other than God. I’ve done that so much in my past, and I still do it. As soon as I read that definition, I knew what God was pointing out to me. I was using something to fill a void in my life that only God can fill. Ever since He had me read this verse, He has continually and gently reminded me to go to Him for my needs. God and I have had many conversations about this, and I’m sure we will continue to do so. I’m glad we’re talking and I’m listening and He’s listening.

I’m learning everyday that God loves me, really loves me. I need to let that sink in to my consciousness all the time. He cares about all that is going on with me and with all those I love. I can trust Him to fill both our urgent physical and our deeply emotional needs because He loves us. It’s more than an “I’m going to heaven when I die” exchange; it’s a “God loves me and has created me to have a relationship with Him” daily life. God is so patient with me. It has taken 50 years for Him to teach me how much He loves me and He never quits.

Tanya is a wife, mother, grandmother, and an innkeeper at a bed and breakfast.